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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5237  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1296  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3364  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2602  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KATHMANDU 000753

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [UN](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: UNMIN CHIEF PREDICTS ELECTIONS WILL BE POSTPONED

REF: KATHMANDU 728

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Summary  
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11. (C) Ian Martin, the head of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), told the Ambassador April 10 that he expected Chief Election Commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel to state publicly soon that the Constituent Assembly election would have to be postponed until the fall. Martin said Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) General Secretary M.K. Nepal had agreed in private that the June 20

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date was not workable. But the CPN-UML leader planned to press publicly for an election in June until Prime Minister G.P. Koirala admitted it was impossible. Martin appeared shocked when the Ambassador described the training of new recruits that was going on in Maoist cantonments. The UNMIN chief concurred with the Ambassador on the need to get new recruits and children out of the camps as soon as possible. Martin indicated newly appointed Peace and Reconstruction Minister Poudel seemed to be off to a good start.

Chief Election Commissioner Likely To Announce Delay  
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12. (C) The UN Secretary General's Special Representative and head of the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), Ian Martin, reiterated April 10 to the Ambassador that it was not feasible for Nepal to hold a Constituent Assembly (CA) election on June 20. There simply was not enough time to prepare. He admitted that he had been conveying this message privately and semi-publicly for a few weeks. Martin noted with pride that the UN was now a charter member of the so-called "international conspiracy" against June elections. The Ambassador stated that, contrary to claims by Maoist chief Prachanda, the United States had not taken a public position against the June 20 date and did not plan to do so. Any U.S. criticism of the date would likely backfire and make it more difficult for the parties to make the tough decision to postpone. Martin replied that the good news was that Chief Election Commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel had already laid the groundwork for a postponement by continually pointing out that the Government of Nepal had not yet passed

the legislation needed for an election. If Pokharel announced the election would have to be delayed, which the UNMIN chief expected he would do soon, the parties would not be able to blame him for not warning them.

#### Political Gamesmanship and Questions About a New Election Date

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13. (C) Martin said that, during a recent meeting with Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) General Secretary M.K. Nepal, Nepal had admitted that it would not be possible to hold an election by June 20. Nevertheless, Nepal indicated that he planned to continue insisting in public that the election be held by then. He said he had no plans to stop doing so until Prime Minister G.P. Koirala proclaimed that a June election would be impossible. Martin stated that the Chief Election Commissioner had been a little vague during their last meeting about a new election date, but had mentioned November or December as possibilities. The Ambassador expressed concern about delaying the election until then and inquired if it would be possible to hold the election any earlier, keeping in mind that the major Nepali holidays of Dashain and Tihar would come late this year. Martin promised to ask Pokharel. (Note: With the first of these holidays falling in mid-October, there is some possibility that the 30-day campaign period and election could be held between the end of the monsoon and the beginning of the holidays.)

#### UN Monitoring of Arms

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14. (C) The Ambassador asked the UNMIN chief if the Maoists had turned in any more weapons since the UN announced the end of the registration of Maoist arms and combatants in March.

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Martin said that they had not and that negotiations were still ongoing between the Maoists and the parties on the security arrangements for Maoist VIPs other than Maoist ministers. Perhaps when an agreement was reached, some of the weapons the Maoists had retained for VIP security would be handed over. In the course of his last meeting with Prachanda, Martin said he had been surprised to find a Nepal Army soldier on the Maoist compound. Martin's political advisor, John Norris, pointed out that the soldier was guarding the new (Maoist) Minister for Physical Planning, Hsila Yami. Norris added that the Maoists had agreed to mark the weapons they were using for VIP security so they could be readily identified. Martin mentioned that he had encouraged the Maoists to turn in more weapons because that would mean the Nepal Army would have to do the same. He said that registration and storage under UN monitoring of Nepal Army weapons had begun April 10 at Chaunni Barracks in Kathmandu and was expected to conclude by April 12.

#### Military Drill, New Recruits and the Youth Communist League

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15. (C) The Ambassador relayed a conversation he had had several days earlier with a Nepali journalist who had visited one of the Maoist cantonments (reftel). The journalist had seen a daily schedule of military drill, interspersed with sport and lectures in military theory. One of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) "officers" present at the camp had openly admitted he was training new recruits. Martin appeared a little shocked, but did not disagree when the Ambassador ruefully noted that the Maoists had intended to use the camps to train new divisions all along. The Ambassador reported the journalist's view that most of the PLA had joined the Maoist Youth Communist League (YCL). The Maoists were using this new group to continue their abuses. Martin agreed that the activities of the YCL threatened to undermine the planned Constituent Assembly elections. He and the Ambassador both welcomed plans by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to issue a report on the

YCL in the near future.

#### Maoist Combatant Verification

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¶6. (C) The UNMIN chief did not say when he expected the second phase of UNMIN's registration of Maoist combatants to start, but he did mention that the Maoist leadership wanted to review past agreements and the procedures for verification of bona fide combatants before the process proceeded. The Ambassador and Martin seconded Indian Ambassador Mukherjee's recent suggestion that the Maoists should send 8,000 to 10,000 of the new recruits and those under 18 home immediately. This would simplify the entire process, including the challenges of camp management. Martin noted, however, that it might be necessary to provide some face-saving mechanism for the new recruits who had spent several months in the camps. The Ambassador emphasized that sending a large group home would be a good first step, but there would still need to be a thorough vetting of those who remained -- and the sooner, the better.

#### UN Staffing and Support

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¶7. (C) The UN Secretary General's Special Representative stated that his biggest challenge from an operational point of view was logistics. In response to a question from the Ambassador, Martin admitted that he had told Thailand to hold off sending any arms monitors for now. He had 110 on the ground and could not support more. What he needed were more logisticians and civil affairs officers. Martin thought he probably would not be able to handle the full complement of 189 arms monitors until May. A piece of good news was that all of his election officers were in place in the field. The UNMIN chief also voiced appreciation over his budget and the flexibility UN Headquarters had given his mission -- for example, when it came to the rules on procuring vehicles. He admitted that most large UN missions had nine months to prepare for a five-year assignment; UNMIN had not been so fortunate.

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#### New Peace Ministry

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¶8. (C) Martin remarked that he thought Ram Chandra Poudel, the newly appointed Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, was off to a good start. It was a positive sign that Poudel had gone immediately to visit two of the cantonments. The Peace Ministry was going to have its hands full making sense of, and carrying through on, all the commitments that had been made in the various peace agreements, including standing up the various commissions and committees. The UNMIN chief said he had heard Poudel was hoping to take over the Peace Fund from the Finance Ministry. Martin and the Ambassador agreed that made little sense. The Ambassador highlighted the difficulties Poudel had inherited in negotiating with the Madhesis and the ethnic communities because of Prime Minister Koirala's decision to retain Krishna Sitaula, whom those groups despised, as Home Minister. Martin did not disagree.

#### Comment

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¶9. (C) We appreciate UNMIN's decision to spend some of its political capital to make the case for delaying Nepal's Constituent Assembly election until after the monsoon. A free, fair and inclusive Constituent Assembly election is unlikely on June 20, but the United States is not in a position to make that argument, at least not publicly. In contrast, we regret the delay in the launch of the second phase of Maoist combatant registration. The longer the new recruits remain in the camps, the more mischief they will be capable of on their release, and the more the children in the

camps will suffer. The Maoists seem unwilling to even admit they have a problem. According to press reports, the new (Maoist) Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare, Khadga Biswokarma, denied April 10 that there were any minors in the cantonments. Even if the CA election is delayed until the fall, Nepal and the international community, including the U.S. and the UN, will have our work cut out for us.

MORIARTY